

By Ravi Bhatia – Talk Radio News Service

U.S. Reps. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and Ron Klein (D-Fl.), co-chairs of the bipartisan Iran Working Group, introduced Mehdi Khalaji and Hasan Sarbakhshian Wednesday on Capitol Hill to discuss their recent experiences with Iran.

Khalaji, a senior fellow at The Washington Institute, currently researches Shiite politics in the Middle East and the role of the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, in Iran's foreign policy. Sarbakhshian, a photographer from Iran, was going to speak behind a screen to protect his identity but opted to let his name and his face be shown.

"As a photographer, it's like a soldier, all the time on the front line," Sarbakhshian said. "Now the time's changed and maybe I need to do something for the people, I need to tell what I saw in Iran."

When the government banned him from taking pictures prior to the election, Sarbakhshian joined much of the Iranian population and posted photos and videos with his "small digital camera."

"Nowadays carrying a camera is very dangerous. Some photographers flee the country," he said.

Khalaji spoke about the conflict between the first and the second generations of the Islamic Republic, which, he said, is at the heart of the current crisis.

"You have seen many photos and video clips, and have read many reports from newspapers.

But I want to raise a question. Will this crisis last? Or will the government be able to manage the crisis and get over it?”

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